

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01 MC-02 H-03 AEC-11

ACDA-19 SS-20 NSC-07 DRC-01 /156 W

----- 018202

R 070700Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3086

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

CINCUSAFE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1135

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BEXP, BE, NL, NO, DA

SUBJ: F-104 AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT: DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING  
ON F-104 REPLACEMENT

REF: STATE 038015

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR DELIVERED LETTER PER INSTRUCTIONS TO MOD  
VREDELING AND IN GENERAL CONVERSATION WHICH FOLLOWED MOD GAVE  
STATE OF PLAY ON REPLACEMENT ISSUE AND A GENERAL TIME AND EVENTS  
SEQUENCE FOR THE DECISION PROCESS. HIS COMMENTS DID NOT FOCUS  
DIRECTLY ON SPECIFICS OF LETTER. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN MEETING WITH MOD VREDELING MARCH 4 I DELIVERED LETTER INCORPORATING SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL WHICH, I POINTED OUT, CONTAINED AN IMPORTANT NEW DEVELOPMENT: ASSURANCE OF SIGNIFICANT USG LOGISTICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR ANY AMERICAN PLANE SELECTED BY THE GON. VREDELING WAS ALSO INFORMED OF OUR HOPE THAT THE NETHERLANDS WOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN SELECTING AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, IN WHICH CASE THE US WOULD DO ITS VERY BEST TO ENCOURAGE BELGIUM, NORWAY, AND DENMARK TO SELECT THE SAME AIRCRAFT. ALL FOUR NATO ALLIES WOULD THUS ENJOY THE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES OF COMMONALITY.

2. VREDELING ONLY SKIMMED THE LETTER QUICKLY AND OUR CONVERSATION DID NOT FOCUS ON ITS SPECIFIC CONTENTS.

3. VREDELING SAID THAT HE HIMSELF IS CONVINCED THAT THE F-104'S MUST BE REPLACED BUT BEFORE HE CAN NEGOTIATE WITH RESPECT TO A PARTICULAR PLANE THERE WILL HAVE TO BE A FAVORABLE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' DECISION ON THE WHITE PAPER AS AN ENTITY WHICH TOUCHES ON MANY SUBJECTS AND PROPOSES A MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM. THE CABINET WOULD REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE FIGHTER REPLACEMENT IN ISOLATION. HE ADDED CABINET APPROVAL OF THE WHITE PAPER IS NOT A CERTAINTY.

4. VREDELING CONFIRMED THAT THERE WERE ONLY THREE CONTENDERS AT THE PRESENT TIME - THE VIGGEN, THE MARAGE AND THE COBRA. HE MENTIONED, HOWEVER, THE POSSIBILITY THAT OTHER PLANES MIGHT HAVE TO BE EVALUATED DEPENDING ON WHAT ROLE IS FINALLY ASSIGNED TO THE NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE. VREDELING DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE REPLACEMENT PLANE SHOULD BE TOO COSTLY AS HE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE A LARGER NUMBER OF PLANES RATHER THAN FEWER, HIGHER-COST PLANES. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE DUTCH DECIDED AGAINST THE MRCA. VREDELING ALSO NOTED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE POSITION THE OTHER SMALLER NATO COUNTRIES WERE GOING TO TAKE AND INDICATED TALKS WITH THEM WILL BE NECESSARY.

5. ON TIMING VREDELING SAID THAT BY APRIL HE EXPECTED TO PRESENT THE WHITE PAPER TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. ASSUMING THE WHITE PAPER IS ADOPTED AS GOVERNMENT POLICY, IT WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE ACTED ON BY PARLIAMENT FROM WHOM NO DECISION COULD REALISTICALLY BE EXPECTED UNTIL EARLY FALL OR PERHAPS UNTIL THE FIRST PART OF

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1975. ON TIMING VREDELING SAID THAT BY APRIL HE EXPECTED TO PRESENT THE WHITE PAPER TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. ASSUMING THE WHITE PAPER IS ADOPTED AS GOVERNMENT POLICY, IT WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE ACTED ON BY PARLIAMENT FROM WHOM NO DECISION COULD REALISTICALLY BE EXPECTED UNTIL EARLY FALL OR PERHAPS UNTIL THE FIRST PART OF 1975. HOWEVER ONCE VREDELING HAS OBTAINED CABINET APPROVAL, HE PLANS TO CONTACT THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE OF THE SECOND CHAMBER. IF HE IS ABLE TO GET A GENERAL INDICATION OF APPROVAL

FROM THE COMMITTEE, HE SAID HE WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION TO UNDERTAKE CONCRETE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT. VREDELING ADDED THAT IF THE WHITE PAPER RUNS INTO TROUBLE IT WILL BE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND NOT IN THE SECOND CHAMBER WHERE HE ANTICIPATES NEGATIVE VOTES FROM ONLY THE COMMUNISTS AND A FEW OTHER LEFT-WINGERS.

COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST OCCASION WE HAVE HEARD A TIME AND EVENTS SEQUENCE FROM THE DEFENSE MINISTER. ASSUMING A FAVORABLE MINISTERIAL REACTION TO THE WHITE PAPER VREDELING COULD OBTAIN THE PRELIMINARY AND INFORMAL AUTHORIZATION HE FEELS HE NEEDS FROM THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE BY LATE SPRING AT WHICH POINT HE SAYS HE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO NEGOTIATE FOR A SPECIFIC REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT.

I FELT, HOWEVER, HE CARVED OUT CONSIDERABLE MANEUVERING ROOM FOR HIMSELF ON THE REPLACEMENT ISSUE. NONETHELESS HE STATED TWO IMPORTANT FACTS: FIRST, HE PERSONALLY IS CONFINCED THE F-104 MUST BE REPLACED AND SECOND HE WILL PERSONALLY MAKE THE SELECTION ASSUMING CABINET APPROVAL OF THE WHITE PAPER.  
GOULD

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY PLANS, MILITARY SALES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 MAR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** STATE 038015  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 MAR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <28 MAR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <04 JUN 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** F-104 AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT: DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING ON F-104 REPLACEMENT  
**TAGS:** MASS, BEXP, BE, NL, NO, DA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005